[Vol. 1.] THE [No. 50.]

WEEKLY VISITANT.

"OURS ARE THE PLANS OF FAIR DELIGHTFUL PEACE,
"UNWARP'D BY PARTY RAGE, TO LIVE LIKE BROTHERS."

SALEM—SATURDAY EVENING DECEMBER 13, 1806.

BIOGRAPHICAL.

(From the Flowers of Literature, 1805.)

MR. ROBERT BLOOMFIELD.

It is with the most grateful pleasure, that we here introduce to our readers the Farmer's Boy, whose sylvan pipe, even amidst the din of arms, has awakened to delight and charmed with melody the listening world.

Robert Bloomfield was born December 3, 1766; his father, Mr. George Bloomfield, was a taylor at Honington, a village between Euston and Troston, and about eight miles N. E. of Bury. Of six children, Robert was the youngest, and before his infant days had witnessed the four seasons of the year, his father died. Hence we hear him sing,

"'Twas thus with *Giles*: meek, *fatherless*, and poor."

His mother was a school-mistress, and instructed her own children in company with the others. From her maternal care did our poet learn to read as soon almost as he could speak. Though left a widow, with so large a family, Mrs. Bloomfield, by prudent management, and a little aid from friends, was enabled to procure her orphans an education somewhat beyond the limits of a village school-mistress. Robert was, accordingly, sent to Mr. Rodwell, of Ixworth, than whom no man in his sphere was more justly respected. Here he remained about three months, his principal attention being devoted to the improvement of his writing. At the end of this short period, he was taken from school, and never afterwards received any farther teaching, except from his mother.

When he had attained his seventh year, his mother married again, and by a second husband, John Glover, she had another family.

At the age of eleven Robert was taken into the service of Mr. W. Austin, of Sapiston, a village adjoining to Honington; Mr. Austin had married our poet's aunt, on the mother's side; and, from a generous regard to the child, consented to take him into his house, instead of paying him eighteen-pence per week, the usual salary of boys employed in the first and humble offices of a farm. Thus did the "*meek, fatherless, and poor*" little Robert become *a farmer's boy*, while his mother was relieved from every other expence, on his account, except that of providing him with a few clothes; and

even this, so humble were her circumstances, she found some difficulty in accomplishing. The treatment of Mr. Austin towards Robert differed in no respect from that to the other servants, and his conduct to them was exactly the same as towards his own children, of whom he had no less than fourteen; they all worked hard, and all lived well.

Here he remained about four years, when the still lowly circumstances of his mother induced her to write for assistance to two of his brothers, namely, George and Nathaniel, then in London, and in her letter she mentioned, that Robert was so small of his age that it was the opinion of his uncle Austin, he would never be likely to procure his living by hard labour.

The brothers immediately consulted upon this, and the result was, that George, the eldest, who was a shoemaker, wrote back to his mother, with a proposal to take Robert; to keep him, and teach him his own business, while Nathaniel undertook to find him in clothes. Judging this to be a good proposal, his mother accepted it, took coach, and with the tender solicitude of maternal fondness, accompanied her son to London; being, as she said, unwilling to commit her tender charge to the care of a stranger. Mr. George Bloomfield met them at the inn.

Mrs. Bloomfield was a religious woman, of the English church, and had early implanted in the minds of her children a sense of Christian duties.

Never did a son of the *Muses* enter a great city in circumstances more inauspicious than did young Bloomfield, and never was one conducted to a dwelling less adapted to inspire poetry, or to keep alive the lambent flame of youthful genius, than that wherein he was received. But he had imbibed in the pure field and rich scenery of Nature, that which neither the foul atmosphere of a great city, nor the murky dwellings of its poor inhabitants could extinguish.

The lodging of his brother George, in which he was now doomed to reside, was at a Mr. Simms's, No. 7, Pitcher's Court, Bell Alley, Coleman Street. "It is customary," says Mr. G. Bloomfield, in his letter to Mr. Lofft, "in such houses as are let to poor people in London, to have light garrets, fit for mechanics to work in. In the garret where we had two turn-up beds, and five of us worked, I received little Robert!" Such was the first town reception of Robert Bloomfield.

The lodgers were all single men, paying each a shilling a week. Their beds were extremely coarse and far from clean—far different from the wholesome cleanliness of the farm at Sapiston. Little Robert was here, in consequence of his youth and inexperience, the humblest of the humble. He fetched the dinner of his fellow lodgers from the cook's shop and every other errand that was wanted; for which, in return, they all assisted him in his work, and instructed him in his business; his particular branch being that of ladies' shoemaking. Every day, when the boy from the public-house came for the pots, he used to bring the newspaper of the preceding day. To read this it had formerly been the rule for each of the shopmates to perform by turns—but now it became the daily task of Ro-

bert, his time being of the least value. This duty called forth all the learning of our little villager.

On returning home one Sunday evening from the country, where he, with his brother George, had been ranging the whole day, they accidentally entered a dissenting chapel in the Old Jewry, where a minister named Fawcet [author of an admired Poem on War] was lecturing. The eloquence and animation of this gentleman filled Robert, who had never witnessed the like before, with astonishment and delight. The house was amazingly crowded with the genteelest people; and, though they were forced to stand still in the aisle and were much pressed, yet so interested was Robert in the lecturer, that every future Sunday he was punctual in his attendance on him, and derived much advantage from his eloquence.

Sometimes the two brothers attended a debating society, then held at Coachmakers'-hall, but which, with several others, have for some time past been prohibited by government; and now and then they spent an evening at Covent Garden theatre. These were all the opportunities that Robert, at that time, had of improving himself from public speakers. His reading at this period was confined to the History of England, the British Traveller, and a Geographical Dictionary. These were taken weekly, at sixpence a number, and the hours devoted by other boys to play, were spent in reading through these works, which our Poet considered as a task of necessity rather than of amusement; but, shortly, another literary production came into his hands, namely, the London Magazine, in which work at least two sheets were set apart for a review. This Review instantly attracted the mind of Robert; he read it with the most eager and sanguine curiosity, and was most anxious to learn what was passing in the literary world, and what were the merits of the respective publications. Next to the Reviews, poet's corner engaged his attention, and, like the native songsters of the grove, he no sooner heard the notes of others, than, emulous to join the harmonic choir, he began, with conscious sweetness, to warble forth his own. Among others, he composed the following song, which, to the surprise of his brother, he one day repeated to him.

THE MILK-MAID.

On the first of May.

HAIL May! lovely May! how replenish'd my pails,
The young dawn overspreads the east streak'd with gold!
My glad heart beats time to the laugh of the vales,
And COLIN's voice rings through the woods from the fold.

The wood to the mountain submissively bends,
Whose blue misty summits first glow with the sun,
See thence a gay train by the wild rill descends
To join the glad sports—Hark! the tumult's begun.

Be cloudless, ye skies!—Be my COLIN but there,
Not dew-spangled bents on the wide level dale,
Nor morning's first blush can more lovely appear
Than his looks, since my wishes I could not conceal.

Swift down the mad dance, while blest health prompts to move,
We'll count joys to come, and exchange vows of truth,
And, haply, when age cools the transports of love,
Decry, like good folks, the vain pleasures of youth.

His brother George, however strongly he might himself feel the merit of this little pastoral, was desirous of obtaining a more impartial testimony than that of his own judgment. He, therefore, advised Robert to send his juvenile effort to the editor of the newspaper which they read, who to the credit of his poetical taste, gave it an insertion. Several others, which are now lost and forgotten, were also sent and printed. Thus, in reading and composing, did he employ his hours of interval, and soon obtained such a share of knowledge, that, as his brother ingenuously confesses, he, with his fellow workmen in the garret, began to derive instruction from him, though not more than sixteen years old.

They now removed to Blue Hart-court, Bell-alley. Here they found a new acquaintance. James Kay, a native of Dundee. He was a middle-aged man, of a good understanding, and a rigid Calvinist. He had many books, some of which he lent to Robert.—Among these were Thomson's Seasons, Paradise Lost, and some novels. The Seasons no sooner met his eye than he devoted all his leisure to them. "I never heard him," says his brother, "give such praise to any book as that." The chords were struck!—he was awakened to harmony, and he attuned himself to the same delightful theme!

The learned and ingenious Dr. Drake, to whom the world is indebted for an excellent critique upon the Farmer's Boy, accounts it a poetic singularity, that the poetry of Thomson should have passed through a mind so enthusiastically enamoured of it, without impairing the originality of its character, when exercised on a subject so much leading to imitation. This he justly accounts for, by the vivid impression on a most sensible and powerful imagination in his early youth, anterior to his studying of any poet.

[To be continued.]

LIGHT ARTICLES.

A Major O'Grady, just out of foreign service, coming to London in 1769, was recommended to the celebrated patriot Wilkes. One day, the Major walking over Westminster-bridge with his friend, and it blowing a hurricane of wind, Mr. Wilkes was astonished to observe, that he took no sort of care about his hat, whilst himself was under the necessity of constantly keeping a hand upon his. To Mr. Wilkes' caution, the other only replied—"Och! by Jasus, Mr. Wilkes, and I beat you at that; for I had the precaution, e'er I ventured out, to write Major O'Grady in the lining of my hat.—*Lon. pap.*

BON MOT.

A fellow being brought to the bar to answer for a misdemeanor, told his prosecutor, that he could convict him of being both a *thief* and a *murderer*! Upon being required to *prove* his assertion—Why, said he, you ugly villain, you killed a *monkey*, and you *stole* his countenance.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

FOR THE WEEKLY VISITANT.

SOMETHING SPIRITUAL.

SCENE.—A green Island rising considerably above the surface of the sea, and faintly illumined by moonlight and the lingering beams of a summer eve. Two terrestial Spirits, flying towards the main land, alight for a moment on a pointed eminence, as a strain of exquisite music melts on the air.

EUMEL.

List that ethereal note!—Amid the gloom
Of mellowing twilight steal the mellowed tones
Of lulling languishment—anon pervade
The soul—aye visit every throbbing nerve
With mingled ecstasy.
Hark, how they tremble o'er the trembling wave,
And wind in wavy volumes up the heights.

MUZOIL.

The minstrelsy of Heaven!—Some angel-form
From yonder star-bespangled cope descends,
And, as he voyages the moonbeam flood,
Commissioneth effusive messengers
To harbinger his coming.

EUMEL.

No. Muzoil,
Dost not remember that impassioned Youth
Whose slumbering faculties we roused at
With midnight strains of such sweet potency, of
That deep-intranced he burst the bands of sleep,
And, as he pierced the vivid-twinkling ether,
Descried the visions of futurity,
While o'er his breast the billowy magic rolled?

MUZOIL.

I know the wayward Wight;—for since that hour
Oft have I marked, whene'er he roams alone
Beneath the impurpled veil of evening-shade,
How gairish fantasies of loveliest grandeur
Flash unimagined ravishment.
Once, when tumultuous feelings filled his soul,
I watched his frenzied vision climb the void,
Travel the fields of blue immensity,
And speechless converse hold with shadowy shapes,
As though he sought celestial aid, to give
Conception utterance;
But when the embodied image met his view,
A deeper, holier joy suspended sense,
As if supernal glories heaved his bosom.

EUMEL.

From his wild Harp this trembling transport floats.
In yonder willowy vale the Minstrel-youth

Attunes the chords to hymn MARIA's praise.
There mid the intermingling dusk he pours
His soul, and as the tort vibrations speak,
Enkindled thought discerns her twining touch
Evoke cherubic sweetness;
Enrapt with bland enchantment, his life-pulse
Throbs—his heart leaps—his quivering fingers move
In vacancy. Enamoured Zephyrs breathe
Along the Lyre, and kiss the yielding chords;
Their whispered intermitting murmurs sigh,
And lower breathings wake mysterious awe,
As her dim form immingles with the gloom.

MUZOIL.

Enravished Youth, beware!—Tho' Heaven tinge
Her cheek, add fascination to her smile,
And give her eye unutterable meaning—
Fond Youth, beware!—We woke the Genius-flame,
Not to irradiate female bloom—nor waste
Its brilliance o'er mechanic Rhyme,
That moans in concert with the moaning wind—
No—let the Minstrel strike a loftier lay—
Let his charmed Wonder trace the brightening scenes,
That bold Imagination in his dream
Unfolds; and, while he roves the fairy-land,
Imbibe its rainbow beauties,
And, eve the semblance form.—Let him ascend
The cleepy cliff, and fling his melodies
Wide o'er the warring surge, that swells, and foams,
And bursts below him.—Let him sail the clouds,
And mingle music with aerial forms
In tumult sweet.—Let him intensely muse
The martyred Patriot's and the Exile's wrongs;
And, while a glory-tear obscures his view,
Effuse such unimaginable tones,
As damned Oppression's imps shall hear appalled,
And shrink to hell;—such bosom-thrilling tones,
As Milton's holy Harp shall wildly catch,
And roll the modulated ecstasies
O'er Heaven's re-echoing arch.

EUMEL.

His glory dawns,
Like to the beamy Banners of the North,
That stream athwart the welkin.
But let us seek him in his dreamy mood,
And call forth worthier efforts from his Lyre;
MARIA must not *solely* claim his Muse.

MUZOIL.

Depart. Speed the propitious work. Meanwhile
I am commissioned to another Wight,
Who groans beneath accumulated woes,

And loathes existence.
Be it our care to renovate their powers—
To infuse a daring spirit—and expand
The sunbright mount of Immortality.
Farewell. We meet at dawn.

A VISIONARY.

MISCELLANEOUS.

AN AFFECTING SCENE.

From Dante's Inferno—A Fact.

Ugelino, a Florentine Count, had been imprisoned with his four children, by the archbishop Rugguri ; and after his deliverance, thus relates the horrors of his prison :

"The hour approached when we expected to have something brought us to eat ; but instead of seeing any food appear, I heard the doors of that horrid dungeon more closely barred. I beheld my little children in silence and could not weep. My heart was petrified. The little wretches wept : and my dear Anselm said tu guardi ti, padre che hai ? Father, you look upon us, what ails you ? I could neither weep nor answer ; and continued swallowed up in silent agony, all that day, and the following night, even till the dawn of the day.

"As soon as a glimmering ray darted through the doleful prison, that I could see again those faces, in which my own image was impressed, I gnawed both my hands with grief and rage.

"My children, believing I did this thro' eagerness to eat, raising themselves suddenly up, said to me, "My father ! our torments would be less, if you would allay the rage of your hunger upon us." I restrained myself, that I might not increase their misery.

"We were all silent that day and the following.

"The fourth day being come, Gaddoo, falling extended at my feet, cried, pedre moi, che non ni ajute ? My father why do you not help me ? and died !

"The other three expired, one after the other, between the fifth and sixth day, famished as thou now seest me. And I being seized with blindness, began to go, groping upon them with my hands and feet ; and continued calling upon them, by their names, three days after they were dead : then hunger vanquished my grief.

:::::::::::::::::

ADVICE TO LOVERS.

From Miss Highley's Galatea.

"Love, like other little boys,
Cries for hearts, as they for toys ;
Which, when join'd in childish play,
Childishly they throw away." ROCHESTER.

It was time for us to return to the village ; every shepherd offered his arm to his favourite, and whether through design or accident, I know not, but Artidore offered his arm to me. We walked together in silence, without even daring to look at each other, excepting when either of us imagined that the eyes of the one were occupied upon some other object, and unable to perceive the glance which love wished secretly to steal ; and if, perchance, our eyes met each other in those moments, they fell to the ground involuntarily. After we had walked some distance, I summoned up resolution sufficient to address him, saying, "Artidore, the few days that you have honoured us with your company must appear years, if you

have left behind you some one happy in your affections,"—"Oh! Teolinde," he replied, "were the Indies my own, I would give them, that these joyful, happy days might only cease with my life." —"Then you love those rural feasts?"—Oh! no, the feasts are nothing, but it is ....." heaving a deep sigh, and pressing my arm to his side.—I returned his sigh; he spueezed my hand. I know not whether I did not convince him that our feelings were the same.

We had nearly reached home, when old Eleuco, whose proposals and opinions were always received with respect and deference, proposed us to sing a roundelay, that we might enter the village as cheerfully as when we set out. I volunteered myself for the task, and seizing this opportunity of giving some counsel to Artidore, I sung the following, my eyes being intent upon him during the whole time.

"Would you be a happy lover,
Let mystery your actions guide;
Though your heart may be a rover,
Be silence every hour your pride.
If you'd wish your fair, impart
The glowing secrets of her heart;
If you would your fair one prove,
Secresy's the key of love.

In your breast be love confin'd,
True secresy refines its flame;
Love is the virtue of the mind,
When myst'ry stamps it with its name,
If you would your fair one prove,
Secresy's the key of love.

A single word may take away
What you've strove for years to say;
Conceal the feelings of your heart,
Conceal the pleasure and the smart.
If you would your fair one prove,
Secresy's the key of love.

Confide to none, except your heart,
The laurels that you've born away;
Your glory unto none impart,
Nor count its loss, for pleasue gay,
And happiness, will it repay.
If you would your fair one prove,
Secresy's the key of love."

MARRIAGES.

At Beverly, Mr. John B. Snupe, formerly of Salem, to Miss Betsey Foster.
In this town, Mr. James Dalrymple, to Miss Sarah Vincent.

DEATHS.

In Danvers, Mrs. Putnam, wife of Deacon Joseph Putnam.
In this town, Mr. Henry Jackson, of Boston, aged 33.

PUBLISHED BY HAVEN POOL.
Directly west of the Tower of Dr. Prince's Meeting-House.

WANTED....A JOURNEYMAN PRINTER, who is a good Workman, and steady to his business. *Inquire at this Office.*